

Fire Suppression Retardant Equipment Upgrades**FY2003 Request: \$250,000**
Reference No: 35740**AP/AL:** Appropriation**Project Type:** Health and Safety**Category:** Health/Safety**Location:** Statewide**Contact:** Jeff Jahnke**Election District:** Statewide**Contact Phone:** (907)269-8474**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2002 - 06/30/2007**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

Retardant is critical to wildland fire response. This project provides firefighters with safe, dependable equipment. The State maintains 3 primary and 3 secondary retardant bases at strategic locations. The bases provide rapid response to wildland fires to meet the mission to contain 90% of wildland fires at 10 acres or less on lands in "full" and "critical" protection. A Kenai airport base is being developed in response to fire danger from spruce beetle infestation. Palmer, Tanacross, Delta, Kenai, Homer and McGrath bases need retardant equipment repairs and upgrades. Airtankers delivering retardant to fires is the most effective way to rapidly attack fires, support ground forces, and control fires.

Funding:

	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	Total
Gen Fund	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000		\$850,000
Total:	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$850,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going Project
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Total Operating Impact:	0	0
One-Time Startup Costs:	0	
Additional Estimated Annual O&M:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

This is a new project request.

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This project will replace critical retardant base equipment such as water pumps, retardant pumps, fittings and high pressure loading hoses, some of which are 15 years old. All sites would convert to electrical pumps in place of gasoline powered pumps. Emergency wash stations and spill containment equipment would be purchased. This equipment is critical for successful air tanker support for initial attack and is continually used in the urban interface where equipment failure that could result in a large fire cannot be risked. Many wildland/urban interface areas are marginally accessible to ground based initial attack and immediate retardant application can provide the deciding factor in preventing small fires from becoming large. A retardant base is relied upon to be functional at all times.

Project Benefits:

Dependable, safe retardant availability is critical to any wildland fire response. This project will provide firefighters with safe, dependable equipment. In working with or directly in support of local fire departments, the cooperative effort benefits the public with improved service and reduced costs.

Projected Revenue to the State:

The project does not directly raise revenue; however, it contributes to reduced fire suppression costs and reduces destruction of natural resources, public facilities, and private property. A failure in the system could result in a large fire with increased suppression cost and probable loss of property and resources.

Project Support:

Supported by the Alaska State Fire Chiefs Association, local fire departments and general public who receive the benefit of increased fire protection. The project eliminates environmental concerns for retardant spills.

Project Opposition:

None known or anticipated.

Project History:

Retardant sites at Big Delta, Tanacross and McGrath have been in operation for over 30 years. Much of the equipment in service is beyond its useful life and needs replacement. Sites in Homer and Kenai have been put into service recently in response to increased fire danger in those areas resulting from the spruced bark beetle infestation. The site at Palmer has been relocated and modernized but will require progressive maintenance.

Alternative Approaches/Financing Considered:

Continuing to utilize old, worn equipment increases the safety risk to firefighters who rely on them during fires. No alternative funding exists.

Specific Spending Detail:

73000 – \$ 65.0 Contractual funds for maintenance and repair

74000 – \$ 35.0 Maintenance materials

75000 – \$ 150.0 Purchase new equipment